

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

5

DECISION

TOPIC

Land Acquisition Projects

1. Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County – Dale and JoAnn Fisher

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for the acquisition of a parcel of land located in Tama County adjacent to Otter Creek Marsh. The land is located one mile northwest of Chelsea, or 8 miles southeast of Tama, and can be accessed via 350th Street on the north. Dale and JoAnn Fisher are offering this 146-acre tract for the appraised price of \$175,200.

David W. Nebel, Licensed Appraiser of Hertz Appraisal Services, Nevada, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Jerry Gibson negotiated the purchase agreement.

The subject tract consists of a mixture of timber, wetlands, and open grass with 136.8 acres encumbered with a Wetland Reserve Program easement. It is bordered on three sides by Otter Creek Marsh with a small piece in the Southwest corner separated by railroad right-of-way. Acquisition of this tract will allow DNR managers to flood this tract from cells already existing on Otter Creek Marsh. The combination of the two cells will add approximately 200 acres of wetlands to the Wetland Complex.

Acquisition funding will be 100% from the Iowa River Corridor NAWCA (Capital Link #13). Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

2. Muskrat Slough Wildlife Management Area, Jones County – Matthew McQuillen

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested to purchase a parcel of land located in Jones County adjacent to the northwest side of state-owned and managed Muskrat Slough Wildlife Management Area. Matthew McQuillen offers this 78-acre tract for the appraised price of \$281,500. The seller will retain the cropping rights through the end of 2010.

Jamie Nabb, Licensed Appraiser of Mt. Vernon, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Rick Hansen negotiated the purchase agreement.

This property is located three miles west of Olin and eight miles southeast of Anamosa. The nearly level to moderately-sloped tract is comprised of 74.4 acres of cropland with a Corn

Suitability Rating of 54.2, and 3.6 acres of waterways. There are no building improvements. Access is provided by existing access road adjacent south.

This tract will increase the Muskrat Slough area to 678 acres and will add high quality diversity to the existing wetland complex. The acquisition will provide substantial upland nesting habitat, improve surface water quality, and enhance public recreation to this area. In addition, this acquisition will provide protection to the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid which is a threatened and endangered species. The Wildlife Bureau will manage the property in accord with the area management plan.

Acquisition funding will be provided by 75% (\$211,125) Federal Section 6 (Endangered Species) and 25% (\$70,375) from REAP License Plate (Capital Link #162). The property will remain on the property tax rolls. No survey or fencing costs is anticipated. Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

3. Middle River Wildlife Area, Warren County – Robert and Pamela West

The Natural Resource Commission is requested to approve an exchange of real estate with Robert and Pamela West. Both tracts are located at the Middle River Wildlife Management Area in Warren County. The State of Iowa land is 17 acres. The replacement tract from the West's is 1.25 acres.

Dan Kinsinger (DNR – Realty), Licensed Appraiser of Des Moines, Iowa, provided the value estimate. Travis Baker negotiated the exchange agreement. The value estimate of the exchange tracts is \$500 per acre. Pending the survey the West's will pay the DNR \$500 per acre on the acreage differential.

The State of Iowa tract is located south of the Middle River and not accessible by the public or DNR personnel. The tract is also encumbered by a WRP easement. The West tract is located on the north side of the river and is not differentiated from the surrounding public area. It is also encumbered by a WRP easement.

The DNR Wildlife Bureau will apply the proceeds of the proposed exchange to tract of land in Warren County at Red Rock Wildlife Management Area. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation currently owns this tract of land.

The West's agree to pay for the land survey.

Staff recommends approval of the land exchange.

4. Kellerton Bird Conservation Area, Ringgold County – John and Marilyn Besh

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for the acquisition of a parcel of land located in Ringgold County. This 358-acre tract is offered by John and Marilyn Besh for the appraised price of \$662,300 with an agricultural reservation through December 31, 2009.

Gary Thien, Licensed Appraiser of Thien Farm Management, Inc., Council Bluffs, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Jerry Gibson negotiated the purchase agreement.

The property is located one half mile south and one half mile east of Kellerton. The tract is accessible from 310th Avenue on the west; 250th Street on the south; and 240th Street on the north. The Northwest corner of the subject tract is adjacent to an existing DNR tract that will connect to the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area on the west. Current use of the property consists of 123.4 acres in crop production; 188.4 acres of cropland currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); 38.2 acres of non-productive land; and 8.0 acres of road right-of-way. There is an old (small) concrete block garage on an old building site, and contributes no value to the property. CRP contracts are as follows:

- 33.4 acres at \$79.87 per acre per year with a 2017 date of expiration
- 4.7 acres at \$101.80 per acre per year with a 2015 date of expiration
- 150.3 acres at \$75.16 per acre per year set to expire September 30, 2009.

The CRP contract set to expire in 2009 has been re-enrolled for an additional ten years at \$85.85 per acre per year. The CRP acres are seeded primarily to cool season grasses. The Iowa DNR will comply with USDA-CRP rules, but will not receive payments. The average CSR of the cropland is 42.7.

Acquisition of the tract will enhance utilization by the Greater Prairie Chicken. The tract will be managed by the Wildlife Bureau.

Acquisition funding will be from REAP License Plate (Capital Link #162). The property will remain on the property tax rolls. Incidental closing costs are the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

5. Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area, Monona County – INHF

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested to purchase a parcel of land located in Monona County adjacent to the south side of state-owned and managed Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) offers this 138-acre tract for the price of \$240,000. INHF purchased the property at public auction in 2006 for \$223,450 and have applied for a REAP grant in which the DNR will pay up to 75% of appraised price. The appraised price of the tract is \$330,000.

Robert Rosno, Licensed Appraiser of Sioux City, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Rick Hansen negotiated the purchase agreement.

This property is located three miles west of Castana in central Monona County. The gently sloping to steep tract is comprised of 53.3 acres (39%) of cropland and 84.7 acres of forest interspersed with grassed areas. There are no building improvements. Access is provided by a county gravel road along the southeast corner.

This tract will increase the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area to over 2,900 acres, and will provide wildlife habitat, and enhance public recreation to this area. The Wildlife Bureau will manage the property in accord with the area management plan.

Acquisition funding will be provided by 100% REAP Private/Public grant (Capital Link #152). The property will remain on the property tax rolls. No survey or fencing costs is anticipated. Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

Attachment

Travis Baker, Supervisor
Management Services Division
March 12, 2009